



CITY OF EASTHAMPTON

Mayor Michael A. Tautznik

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June 19, 2006

Andrea Nixon, Clerk
DTE Cable Division
One South Station
Boston, MA 02110



Dear Clerk Nixon,

The City of Easthampton submits the following comments concerning docket CTV 06-1, petition of Verizon Communications.

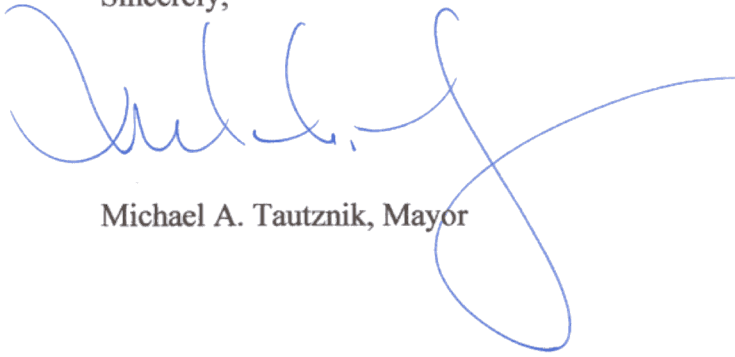
The City of Easthampton, acting through its Mayor, registers strong opposition to the petition in that it imposes unreasonable terms and conditions to the cable television licensing process and assumes that Massachusetts cities and towns would not welcome competitive service providers on a level playing field with the incumbent cable television service provider. In reality, cities and towns all across Massachusetts are interested in working with new service providers to improve choice and competition in this market.

Verizon offers that the local franchise process imposes a barrier to their competitive entry into the marketplace because the licensing for the provision of cable television is not the same as the process utilized for the provision of telephone services. This statement is an artificial attempt to suggest a problem where none exists and should be disregarded by the Commission as a guise to limit local input into service area build-out requirements, PEG access capitalization and institutional network development. Limiting citizen

participation in local franchising decisions by setting an artificial time limit of 60 days for application review and hearing and then only 30 days for decision-making on any license application is not in the public interest. Given our own local experience with the delays, difficulties and threats of legal action from Verizon concerning access, utilization and ongoing maintenance of utility facilities in the public right-of-way, limiting the public process in this manner would not be in the best interest of the citizens of Massachusetts. Contrary to the opinion offered by Verizon in their petition, constricting public input and decision making does nothing to improve “constitutionally protected speech” unless the only one to be provided such protection is Verizon itself.

In initiating the rulemaking as requested by Verizon the Cable Division has undertaken a very difficult and complicated task, one that may ultimately determine if our entire state receives the benefits of competition, enhanced broadband access, modern institutional networking and improved PEG television programming. I am hopeful that, at the end of the day, the interests of corporate America do not overshadow the technological needs of lower and middle class Massachusetts residents and the communities served by them. Please make every effort to support the role local government must play in the competitive licensing process to insure that all of our residents are served equally.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael A. Tautznik", with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Michael A. Tautznik, Mayor